

Legislative Committee Members:

Debra H. Denette, Chair, East Haddam
Mark Bernacki, New Britain
Betsy Brown, Fairfield
Lisa Dalton, Watertown
Betsy Moukawsher, Groton
Barbara Thompson, Wallingford
Patricia Spruance, Windham
Mary Stanton, Mansfield



Advisory Board Members:

Patricia Strauss, CTCA President
Joyce Mascena, Immediate Past President
Antoinette Spinelli, 1st Vice President
Anna Posinak, 2nd Vice President
Bernice Dixon, DPH Vitals Committee Chair
Essie Labrot, West Hartford

Lobbyist:

Michael Dugan, Capitol Consulting LLC

Testimony of
Connecticut Town Clerks Association
Patty Strauss, President (Westport Town Clerk)
Government Administration & Elections Committee
Monday, February 29, 2016

Senate Bill 251, AN ACT CONCERNING REPORTING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS
Senate Bill 252, AN ACT CONCERNING POST-ELECTION AUDIT INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY
House Bill 5386, AN ACT CONCERNING VOTES FOR CROSS ENDORSED CANDIDATES
House Bill 5390, AN ACT CONCERNING WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS AND OPINIONS FROM THE
SECRETARY OF THE STATE

Good day Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Smith and the distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Patty Strauss and I am the President of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association. You have before you a myriad of elections bills, many of which involve technical improvements. We leave the policy making to your legislative body and offer these comments where we are concerned that policy and process come into conflict.

Regarding **Senate Bill 251**, AN ACT REPORTING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS, in section 3a, in line 129, after the words "Secretary of the State" insert the words "town clerks". Town clerks should receive the amended return along with the Secretary of the State and register of voters. With these changes the Town Clerks Association supports this legislation.

Regarding **Senate Bill 252**, AN ACT CONCERNING POST-ELECTION AUDIT INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY, in section 1, we would like to note that the town clerk currently and always should continue to conduct the random drawing for the audit in order to maintain a check and balance to this process. Also in **Senate Bill 252**, in section 4a (lines 267 to 271), changing the time for the tabulators to remain sealed from 14-days to a period of up to 60-days after an election could be problematic due to the possible need to conduct referenda or special election in that timeframe. For example, many towns will need to use the tabulators in May for budget referenda just weeks after the April 26 Presidential preference primaries. The Town Clerks Association believes the timing on sealing tabulators needs to be shorted to accommodate these situations.

Regarding **House Bill 5386**, AN ACT CONCERNING VOTES FOR CROSS ENDORSED CANDIDATES, we support a technical change to the wording from 'unknown' to 'unassigned' vote for better clarity in its meaning.

Finally, **House Bill 5390**, AN ACT CONCERNING WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS AND OPINIONS FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE, the clerks are supportive of creating a permanent public archive, however, this should not replace the Secretary's responsibility to provide timely updates to the clerks as she presently does. The Town Clerks Association recommends the Secretary of the State continue with the practice of notify clerks when opinions and written instructions are made or updated while archive them on a searchable website for future reference. With this understanding the Town Clerks Association supports this legislation.

I would also like to add that the Town Clerks are looking forward to working with the Secretary of the State's Office as they introduce the Election Management software program to enhance the use of technology into the election process when reporting Election night results.

Thank you this opportunity to testify on these important proposals. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.